



*"THE HEAVENS DECLARE  
THE GLORY OF GOD"*  
PSALM 19:1

## What's Happening?

### More Sound Reasons

The next chapter event is Saturday, January 15, and is titled "The Language of DNA." The information, presented at a layman's level, will help you to see the evidence of God's handiwork and the problems it poses to evolutionary theory.

Join us at Highlands Community Church in Renton. There will be fellowship and food from 8:30-9:00 and presentation from 9-11. Mark your calendar!

### New RTB Online Courses

Reasons Institute will offer several training courses in January 2011:

- Biblical Archeology, Dr. John Bloom
- Critical Thinking, Ken Samples
- World Religions & Science, Ken Samples
- Origin of Life, Fuz Rana
- Humans Origins, Fuz Rana

More info at [www.reasons.org/learning/reasons-institute/courses](http://www.reasons.org/learning/reasons-institute/courses).

### New RTB Product

Here's a great new resource at the RTB webstore: *Impact Events - The Universe*. This study guide is designed to help youth better understand God's creation. Go to [www.reasons.org/catalog/impact-events](http://www.reasons.org/catalog/impact-events).

### In This Issue

- Meet Us . . . . . 2
- In the News . . . . . 2
- Book Review . . . . . 3
- Who We Are . . . . . 4

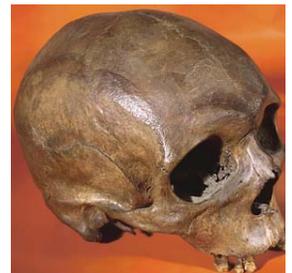
## Out of Africa or Eden?

*By Rich Deem*

Numerous genetic studies over the last few decades have shown that human genetic diversity is greatest within African populations, leading scientists to proclaim that modern human populations originated in Africa. However, the Bible says that humans were created in Eden, which is described as being in or near Mesopotamia. Can we stretch the biblical creation narrative to place Eden in Africa or is it possible that the science is wrong? Alternatively, is the Bible just wrong about where humans originated?

Eden in Africa?

Some Christians have suggested the Bible is not specific enough to conclude Eden is in Mesopotamia. Let's look at the biblical description of Eden to see if it could include eastern Africa.



The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:8-14)

The location of Eden has always been somewhat uncertain. However, the Bible describes four rivers, two of which (the Tigris and Euphrates) are in Mesopotamia. The other two rivers are unknown. However, the Bible describes the river Gihon as being associated with Cush, which is described as being near Egypt, and is usually associated with the land of Ethiopia. The other river (Pishon) is said to be in the land of Havila, which is described as being east

*Continued on page 3*

## Meet our Members



### Introducing Gary Jensen

#### ***What do you do for a living?***

I am the Pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Snohomish, WA.

#### ***How and when did you become a Christian?***

I fell away from Christ late in high school even though I had been raised in a Christian home. Very early on in college I was confronted with the reality of Christ and His call upon my life, and so, in spite of my resistance, I responded to Him. I am thrilled that He won out.

#### ***How and when did you discover RTB?***

I have had a long interest in apologetics and had also heard of Hugh Ross for some time. When my wife informed me that he was lecturing in Puget Sound I went to hear him. My Christian world-view was greatly strengthened and clarified most especially by his correlation of Big Bang cosmology with the teachings of Holy Scripture.

#### ***When did you become a part of the Seattle Chapter?***

I became a part of our Puget Sound chapter around 1998 through my friend Greg Moore, who had been its president.

#### ***What is your role in the chapter?***

I have played a role in developing relationships with local churches. And I have also written articles, some of which have appeared in our newsletter, as well as in an RTB flyer. Of course, I've also helped at local events, greeting attendees and manning the chapter booktable.

#### ***What is your favorite pastime?***

I love the companionship of my wife Ann and the blessings of our four grown children and their families. I enjoy high-country hiking and backpacking, peering through my telescope, and singing with my wife in the Sacred Music Chorale. I also enjoy writing apologetic articles that challenge people to think through the issues of our faith.

#### ***What is the most interesting thing you've done?***

For our thirtieth wedding anniversary my wife and I went on a two week tour across Italy, including Venice, Florence, the Cinque Terre, Tuscany, and Rome. It was the most wonderful trip we have ever taken.

*In our next issue we'll highlight another member of the Seattle RTB Chapter. We hope you'll plug into the chapter and we can introduce you to our readership!*

## Bible & Science In the News

### ■ The Happy Warrior

This article in *World Magazine* by Marvin Olasky is about Hugh Ross. According to Olasky, Ross' sense of calling makes him a modern version of the happy warrior praised by poet William Wordsworth, a generous spirit whose path is always bright, with an instinct to discern and learn. Go to [www.worldmag.com/articles/17343](http://www.worldmag.com/articles/17343).

### ■ Young Doubters Exit the Church

This *Christianity Today* article by Drew Dyck discusses what recent studies reveal about the growing trend in young adults exiting the Church. According to Dyck a significant part has to do with the culture we live in and our inability to respond effectively to it. Go to: [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/November/27.40.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/November/27.40.html).

### ■ Many Earth-Sized Planets

This RTB article by Jeff Zweerink discusses findings published in *Science* where the authors conclude that over one quarter of the Sun-like stars host Earth-sized planets orbiting at distances that would support life. According to Zweerink, these claims are overblown and ignore the criteria needed for life support. Go to [www.reasons.org/many-earth-sized-planets](http://www.reasons.org/many-earth-sized-planets).

### ■ With All Your Mind

This Breakpoint article by Curt Thompson discusses what it means to love God with *all* our mind. According to Thompson this is not simply changing our way of thinking. Rather it allowing God to renew our brains so they are rewired around God's truths. Go to: [www.breakpoint.org/features-columns/articles/entry/12/15831](http://www.breakpoint.org/features-columns/articles/entry/12/15831).

### ■ New Origin-of-Life Research

In this RTB article by Fuz Rana examines experiments proposing life arose from frozen water on Earth. According to Rana these experiments do not have geochemical relevance and merely show it could have happened in principle. Go to: [www.reasons.org/do-latest-advances-origin-of-life-research-put-case-intelligent-design-ice](http://www.reasons.org/do-latest-advances-origin-of-life-research-put-case-intelligent-design-ice).

# Book Review

## The Reason for God

Timothy Keller  
Dutton, 2008

Reviewer: Mike Brown

There are so many books waiting to be read, that I rarely go back and read one a second time. Two exceptions have been *Total Truth* by Nancy Pearcey, and *The Reason for God*. Both books had a major impact on me.

Timothy Keller has a thriving ministry in, of all places, Manhattan. He breaks all the rules for building a “successful” church. He doesn’t preach a watered down gospel, he isn’t charismatic in his presentation, and he doesn’t build fancy edifices. But his success at evangelizing young urbanites is fast becoming the model for other city ministries, including some in Seattle.

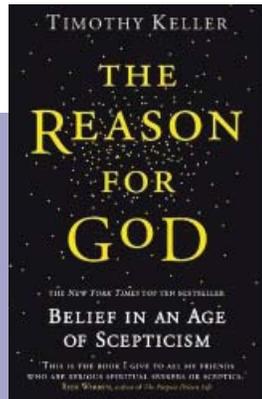
In the first half of the book he looks at seven of the most common objections and doubts about Christianity and discerns the alternate beliefs underlying each of them. The section is titled “The Leap of Doubt” and answers these seven common critiques:

1. There can’t be just one true religion
2. A good God could not allow suffering
3. Christianity is a straitjacket
4. The church is responsible for so much injustice
5. A loving God would not send people to hell
6. Science has disproved Christianity
7. You can’t take the Bible literally

In the second half of the book, titled “The Reasons for Faith,” he turns to an examination of seven reasons to believe in the claims of the Christian faith.

1. The clues of God
2. The knowledge of God
3. The problem of sin
4. Religion and the gospel
5. The (true) story of the cross
6. The reality of the resurrection
7. The Dance of God [Viewing Christianity as a whole]

“Tim Keller’s ministry in New York City is leading a generation of seekers and skeptics toward belief in God. I thank God for him.” —Billy Graham.



of Egypt, toward Assyria,<sup>1</sup> probably being on the Arabian peninsula. A tentative map of the area is shown to the right. If modern humans originated during the last ice age<sup>2</sup> then the Persian Gulf would have been dry (due to sea levels at least 400 feet lower than present).<sup>3</sup> So, it is entirely possible that the location of the Eden is currently under water.

Although it is possible that the Garden of Eden was in Africa, it would have to be at the very boundary of potential locations. In addition, such a location would contradict the Genesis 2 narrative that says God planted the garden “toward the east” (presumably east of Israel). Ethiopia is to the southwest. Therefore, Mesopotamia or the Persian Gulf matches the description of the biblical narrative the best.

### Out of Africa?

Numerous scientific studies have proposed to have shown that a small group of individuals migrated out of eastern Africa and eventually expanded into most of today’s populations.<sup>4</sup> In reality, what the studies have shown is African populations exhibit the most genetic diversity among all people groups. The theory is once a population has been founded, the amount of genetic diversity increases over time. The theory is generally good, but does make some assumptions. One of the assumptions is that the populations have undergone little or no interbreeding with other populations. For Africa, the assumption is generally good, since Africa is geographically isolated from the rest of the world. The only route to get into Africa is through Suez. Likewise, for Native Americans, there was only one route: over the Aleutians near the end of an ice age, when sea levels were low and temperatures were beginning to moderate. However, for people groups in Mesopotamia and the Middle East, there was no geographic isolation. Being at the intersection of three continents, the Middle East has seen numerous people groups migrate through and back. So, it would be *very unlikely* that peoples of the Middle East would have the greatest genetic diversity of modern humans, *even if humans originated there*.

Two new studies, the result of the human genome project, examined the genetic diversity of over 1,000 individuals from 51 population groups all over the world.<sup>5, 6</sup> As in previous studies, peoples of Africa were the most genetically diverse. However, these studies also determined those from the Middle East were the second most genetically diverse. The authors of one study admitted Middle Eastern population genetics was not just simple gene flow, saying, “The Middle Eastern populations may have experienced both continuous gene flow and shared ancestry with the rest of Eurasia.”<sup>6</sup> The authors of either study did not consider the possibility that humans originated in Mesopotamia, as the Bible says, since the out of Africa hypothesis is the current reigning paradigm. However, given the evidence of admixture in Middle Eastern populations and the fact that those populations are still the second most genetically diverse, it is entirely

possible that modern humans originated in the Middle East, but lost much of their genetic diversity through subsequent migrations and replacement.

#### Conclusion

New genetic analysis of human population groups shows peoples of the Middle East represent the second most genetically diverse group among world-wide populations. A hypothesis is proposed that modern humans originated in the garden of Eden, in or near Mesopotamia, through the direct creation of God, and subsequently migrated world-wide, first into Africa, then Asia and Europe, and eventually the Americas and Polynesia. Subsequent back migrations diluted the genetic diversity of this founder population, making them appear to be less ancient than the Africans. The hypothesis can potentially be tested by carefully examining more Middle Eastern populations in more detail to reconstruct the original founder population.

*Rich Deem is a volunteer RTB apologist. He has a Masters of Science in microbiology and is a researcher at the Cedar-Sinai Medical Center. His website is [www.godandsicence.org](http://www.godandsicence.org).*

#### References

- 1.They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives. (Genesis 25: 18)
- 2.The Bible states the covenant and laws of God have been proclaimed to a "thousand generations," requiring a minimum of 40,000 years: Deuteronomy 7:9, 1 Chronicles 16:15, Psalm 105:8.
- See Descent of Mankind Theory: Disproved by Molecular Biology for information on the scientific data about the probable dates for the origin of modern humanity.
- 3.Rising Sea Levels from the University of Michigan.
- 4.Rosenberg, N. A. et al. 2002. Genetic Structure of Human Populations. Science 298: 2381-2385: A. M. Bowcock et al. 1994. High resolution of human evolutionary trees with polymorphic microsatellites. Nature 368: 455-457.
- S. Ramachandran et al. 2005. roc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 102: 15942-15947; Rosenberg, N. A. et al. 2005. Clines, Clusters, and the Effect of Study Design on the Inference of Human Population Structure. PLoS Genet. 1, e70.
- 5.Li, J. Z. et al. 2008. Worldwide Human Relationships Inferred from Genome-Wide Patterns of Variation. Science 319: 1100-1104.
- 6.Jakobsson, M. et al. 2008. Genotype, haplotype and copy-number variation in worldwide human populations. Nature 451: 998-1003.



## Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

#### Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons To Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons To Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, God's Word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

#### What Do We Do?

Our mission is to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science and the Bible.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of RTB.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, to expose them to God's word.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org). Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

### Questions? Get Answers.

If you're looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org). Or call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.